AN NARRATIVE OF THE MANY Unparallel'd HARDSHIPS, AND CRUEL SUFFERINGS, While in FRANCE; OF THE Crew of the TERRIBLE Privateer, COMMANDED BY CAPTAIN WILLIAM DEATH;

With the PARTICULARS of that most BLOODY ENGAGEMENT, and the cruel Treatment of the CREW, when taken by the *Vengeance*, a *French* Privateer.

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Printed by J. TOWERS, in PICCADILLY.
[Price *Six-pence.*]

BRITISH MUSEUM

AN

NARRATIVE

OF THE

Hardſhips, and Cruel Sufferings,

Underwent by the CREW *of the* TERRIBLE PRIVATEER, *Captain* WILLIAM DEATH.

I CAME from *Newfoundland* in the *Penzance* Man of War, of Forty-guns, (where I was Maſter at Arms,) about ſix Months before I entered on board the *Terrible* Privateer of *London*, Capt. *William Death*. I might have had any other of his Majeſty's Ships, by applying to any Commander, and producing the Certificates of my Servitude, but my Inclination lead me another Way; I was willing to try my Fortune at Privateering.

Accordingly, *October* 1756, I enter'd myſelf on board the *Terrible*, in the Poſt of Lieutenant of Marines. She mounted Eighteen Guns upon our Main-Deck, Six and Nine Pounders, and Six ſmall Carriage-Guns upon our Quarter-Deck, beſides Swivels; and having got her rigg'd, *&c.* we fell down to *Deptford*. Here we ſtaid a ſhort Time to get every Thing ready for our Cruize, and then ſail'd for the *Hope*, at which Place our Owners came on board, and paid us our Advance-Money. There was a Ship lying at the *Hope*, from *Cales*, which we heard had contraband Goods on board, and being unwilling to let any Thing ſlip by us, we boarded her immediately, and we have Hopes ſhe will be condemn'd as a lawful Prize.

As ſoon as the Ship's Company was paid, we gave our Owners at their Departure, a Salute with our Great-Guns, weigh'd Anchor, and ſail'd to the *Downs* in the higheſt Spirits imaginable.

We ſtay'd a ſhort Time in the *Downs*, and ſail'd from thence to *Plymouth*. In our Paſſage to *Plymouth* we had hard Gales of Wind, which pretty well try'd ſome of our People, who had not been at Sea. We ſtay'd about ten Days at *Plymouth*, getting in Stores and Proviſions, and ſeveral Seamen enter'd on board us. About the eighth of *December*, 1756, we ſet ſail from *Plymouth*, on our intended Cruize.

We had on board, when we left *Plymouth*, Two Hundred and Three Men and Boys. After we had clear'd the Land, our Ship's Company grew very ſickly, and our Men dy'd very faſt. At Break of Day, on the 23d of *December*, 1756, the Man at the Maſt-head, ſpy'd a Sail, about Lat. 47. We crowded all the Sail we could after her. Finding ſhe could not get from us, ſhe hawl'd up her Courſes, and lay to for us. When we came within Gun-ſhot, we fired at her, and ſhe returned it keeping up a Sort of running Fight. But at laſt, getting pretty cloſe, a ſmart Engagement began, ſhe fighting us Broad-

ſide,

ſide, and Broadſide, two Hours before ſhe ſtruck.

We loſt in the Engagement, *John Death*, our Fourth Lieutenant, the Maſter at Arms, the Ship's Barber, and one Foremaſtman. One Ball kill'd Lieut: *Death*, the Maſter at Arms, and the Barber. The Maſter at Arms had one of his Arms, and Part of his Body tore away; in this bloody Condition he was carry'd down to the Surgeon, who, ſaying it was impoſſible to ſave his Life, and the poor Man finding himſelf dying, bravely, in his laſt Moments, ſung the Song of, *Britons ſtrike home!* and expir'd with the Words in his Mouth. Part of Lieut. *Death*'s Bowels flew into a Man's Face that ſtood near him, who being cover'd with Blood, was adviſed to go down to the Surgeon, upon which he reply'd, *D——n it, I don't feel myſelf hurt, its Time to go down, when I can ſtand no longer.*

The Ship prov'd to be the *Alexander*, bound from *San Domingo*, to *Old France*; ſhe had *Engliſh* Priſoners on board her, that

that ſhe had taken in her Voyage. There were, likewiſe, on board, two Ladies of Fortune, who came on board us, with their Watches by their Sides, and richly dreſs'd; who were treated by Capt. *Death*, and the whole Crew, with the greateſt Humanity and Politeneſs, Capt. *Death* accommodating them with his own Cabin, and made the beſt Shift he could for himſelf. But his Courteſy was ill rewarded by theſe *French* Raſcals, as the Reader will find in the Sequel!

We reckon'd her to be as rich a Prize, as any that had been taken at that Time, for one Ship's Company to ſhare; my Share being computed at Five Hundred Pounds. We repair'd the Prize, and got her ready as well as we could, ſhe being in a ſhatter'd Condition, and it was agreed upon, to make the beſt of our Way to *Plymouth*.

As we were on our Paſſage to *Plymouth*, on the 26th of *December*, in the Afternoon, in about Lat. 48, 22, we ſaw two ſail to Windward of us. Little Wind

on

on the 27th, in the Morning, we ſaw the two ſame Ships, one of whom came right down upon us; ſhe proved to be a *French* Privateer of Thirty-ſix Guns, and Three Hundred and Fifty-Men, call'd the *Vengeance*, belonging to *St. Maloes*. She came under our Stern, and rak'd us fore and aft, which kill'd a Number of our Hands. We had put on board our Prize, Mr. *Catling*, the Firſt Lieutenant, with fifteen Hands, which the *Vengeance* fir'd at in coming down to us, and the Prize returned the Fire very ſmartly, and continued ſo to do, during the whole Engagement. Conſidering the ſmall Number of Hands, Mr. *Catling* had, he behav'd with uncommon Bravery, and Reſolution. The *Terrible* and *Vengeance*, lay Board and Board a conſiderable Time, ſo cloſe that their Anchor was foul of our Bow. The firſt Broadſide we gave them, we kill'd their Captain, and upwards of Sixty of their Hands, beſides what was wounded. We being Yard-arm, and Yard-arm, and they being above double our Number, they had a great Advantage over us, by having their

their Tops full of Men, who dropt us with their Small Arms, like Birds.

It is impoſſible to deſcribe the bold and undaunted Behaviour of both Officers and Men! Mr. *Withy*, our Third Lieutenant, after a Ball had graz'd on his Face, and the Hair of his Wig almoſt ſing'd off, brandiſhing his Cutlas, call'd out, *Come on board, ye French Dogs, if you dare, and we'll warm ye!* It was a Miracle he eſcap'd with his Life, for his bold Behaviour ſo exaſperated the *French*, that they levell'd at him ſeveral Times, but happily for him, he is now alive and well, and both ready and willing to take a ſuitable Revenge.

Capt. Death, our gallant Commander, behav'd like an Hero; after he had received two Balls in his Left-Side which went thro' him, he held his Left-hand to the Wounds, and with the other graſping his Sword, he for a long Time gave his Orders, and cheer'd and animated his Men, as if nothing had happen'd, nor was he obſerv'd to change his Countenance. Never was

a hotter Engagement than this, while it laſted, the Blood running in Streams out of the Scupper-Holes. It was a diſmal Sight to ſee, and hear the Cries of the Wounded; Legs and Arms, and poor Souls, ſome without either Legs or Arms, being ſtrew'd thick on the Deck. At laſt Capt. DEATH, ſeeing moſt of his Men kill'd, order'd the Colours to be ſtruck; Mr. *Withy* cry'd out, *Dear, Capt.* DEATH, *let us fight till we die; let us die, rather than be taken by the* French *Dogs*; to which Capt. DEATH reply'd, *It is in vain to ſtand it out any longer,——You ſee my Men are almoſt all dead:* And order'd the Colours to be ſtruck, which was accordingly done; on which Lieut. *Catling* in the Prize did the ſame, after fighting the Prize, with unparallel'd Bravery.

WHAT is moſt ſhocking, and deſerves the Indignation and Reſentment of all true *Engliſhmen* is, that Capt. DEATH received a Muſket Shot in his Back, after our Colours were ſtruck, an Action contrary to the Rules of War; and what ought to held in the utmoſt Abhorrence. This

Wound

Wound was the Cauſe of his Death, for 'tis probable, he might have recover'd of the others. They ſoon after ſtript him of his Watch, and what elſe was valuable, and threw into the Sea.

BEFORE we ſtruck we kill'd One Hundred and Thirty-five of the Enemy, by their own Accounts; our Ship being painted black, and cutting a grim Figure, the *French* ſaid, when they brought us into Port, that they had taken a Ship full of Devils; for nothing leſs they ſaid, could have made ſo terrible a Reſiſtance againſt a Force ſo much ſuperior to us.

WHEN Orders were given to ſtrike, *David Bowers*, our Boatſwain, who had behaved like a bold *Engliſh* Tar, cry'd out, with a Mixture of Anger, and Grief, *Dear Captain, don't ſtrike yet! D——n my Eyes, let's have t'other Broadſide at 'em!* The Words were no ſooner out of his Mouth, than a Cannon-Ball took off his Head. I heartily pity his Fate, we having loſt in him a brave Seaman.

I HOPE the Reader will excuſe my mentioning theſe Particulars, and the Manner in which they were ſpoke. I having no other View in it, than to ſhew the Spirit of the Men. It is very certain, the *French* might have boarded us, having many Advantages, both in Reſpect to Numbers, and the Size of their Ship; but the bold, and deſperate Behaviour of the whole Crew, terrify'd their Men ſo much, that they never made the Attempt.

I COME now to relate the moſt melancholly Scene of all, which will ſhew my Brother Seamen, what they are to expect from the pretended Generoſity of the *French*. When they came on board us, as I ſaid before, the Deck was cover'd with our Men, ſome dead, and many with their Arms and Legs off, and otherwiſe wounded: Numbers of thoſe who were wounded, might have recover'd with proper Care; but, theſe barbarous Villains, having no more Regard to the Living than the Dead, tumbled all overboard, in Spite of their Diſmal Cries for

Mercy, which would have pierc'd any Heart, but that of a *French-man*. They then began to ſtrip, and plunder us into our Shirts, and ſome they ſtript to the Skin. I had a Cheſt of good Cloaths, which they ſoon rummag'd. As I was an Officer on board, I did not think they would ſtrip me, it being very cold Weather, but I was miſtaken; they began with me likewiſe, and ſtript me into my Shirt; I happen'd to have the worſt on of my whole Stock, or they would have taken that too. Hard Fate, thus for Men, who had behav'd ſo generouſly to them, and fought ſo bravely. I always thought 'till now, that Courage was a Recommendation to the Mercy of a conquering Enemy, but we found it otherwiſe. The Weather being ſevere, we were in a periſhing Condition, but, by good Luck, I pick'd up an old Canvas Jacket, a *French-man* had dropt on the Deck, which was of great Service to me. After they had beat us about unmercifully with their Cutlaſſes, they put ſome of us in double Irons on board the *Terrible*, and the Reſt they put on board the *Vengeance*, their own

Privateer,

Privateer, in a diſmal Hole, not big enough for half our Number. They lock'd us in and kept a Guard over us, and we paſſed the Night in a moſt horrid Manner; lying one upon another, and terrify'd with the Groans of our dying Companions, to whom thoſe who were alive could neither give, nor procure any Relief. We made piteous Outcries for Air and Water, but all was in vain, they only damn'd us for *Engliſh* Bougres.

The next Morning, being the 28th of *December*, when they came to look at us, they hawl'd Twenty-ſeven of the poor Wretches out of the Hole, who were ſmother'd to Death. They hawl'd them upon Deck, and threw them overboard, like ſo many Dogs, taking no more Notice of it, than if nothing had happen'd. We that were living, were in a weak Condition, and deſtitute of Covering, and Neceſſaries of all Kinds. We imagin'd, that this cruel Treatment was partly owing to our killing their Captain, who was a Man in great Eſteem with them. They kept us fifteen Days in this

diſmal

diſmal Hole, in which Time we arrived at *St. Maloes*. At this Place they fired Minute-Guns, and made great Lamentations for him.

WE were immediately put on Shore, and guarded to Priſon in a miſerable, and ſtarving Condition, all the Crew very ſickly, and nothing to comfort us. Our Limbs being numb'd with Cold, (it being *January*,) and having little, or nothing to ſecure us from the Inclemency of the Weather, we could not walk faſt enough, which made the Guards lay on us unmercifully with their Cutlaſſes; the People, at the ſame Time, coming from all Parts of the Town, hallowing at us, and calling us bad Names, all the Way we went, 'till we came to the Priſon.

WHEN we were put into the Priſon, we found it a moſt diſmal Place, it being the County Goal for Thieves. We did not ſtay here long before many of us loſt the Uſe of our Limbs, and were ſent to an Hoſpital. When we were recover'd, we were ſent back to the Goal, where we

were

were almoſt ſtarv'd, our Allowance being but four Sous a Day, which is no more than Two-pence *Engliſh* Money: We being oblig'd to lay it out with the Goaler, made it ſtill worſe, for what we could buy in the Town for one Souſe he made us pay two for. We uſed to join a Trifle out of our ſmall Allowance to buy us a little Charcoal to make a Fire, and we had no other Place to make it in but where we eaſed ourſelves. In this ſtinking Hole we uſed to ſit bemoaning our hard Fate, till it becoming too full to hold us, we were taken out, and they march'd us to St. *Severy's*, a Port where they built a great many Privateers. At this Place they embark'd us on board a large Boat and carried us up a River to the City of *Dinain*. When we arrived here we were guarded to the Caſtle, a noted Place for confining *Engliſh* Priſoners of War. In one of the Rooms where I was put were a great many poor Soul's like myſelf, almoſt naked and full of Vermin. There were four pretty large Rooms in the Caſtle beſides a few little Rooms. In the Room I was in were upwards of one Hundred

and

and Eighty Men, and we were ſo crouded that we lay one upon another. Our Bedding was Straw, a ſmall Bundle of which was to ſerve Eight Men twelve Days, at the End of which it was like Chaff, and ſo louſy, that, together with the Cloſeneſs and Naſtineſs of the Place, a Sickneſs broke out which carried Numbers of us off, Nine or Ten dying of a Day. It was a diſmal Sight to ſee us carrying our Dead to be buried, ſew'd up in a Piece of Hopſack, and laid on a Plank, with two Sticks put under the Plank and carried by four of us to each Corps, guarded by a Party of Soldiers with their Bayonets fix'd, driving us along like a Parcel of Sheep. We buried our Dead in a Field about half a Mile from the Caſtle. The Field was left for that Purpoſe by a charitable Proteſtant Lady, who left a Sous a Day for *Engliſh* Priſoners of War. We are continually ſurrounded with Soldiers, who abuſe us and uſe us as they pleaſe; if we make the leaſt Murmuring, we are immediately clapt into the *Cuſhoe*, a diſmal Place under Ground, where we are kept till they think proper to let us out. The

French Interpreter, when we complain'd to him of the Cloſeneſs of our Confinement, made anſwer, *D———n ye, you* Engliſh *Bougres, why don't you die faſter and make more Room.*

On the Firſt of *June* the Brigades who guarded us were order'd out of *Dinain*, but before they march'd they took ſeveral *Engliſh* and *Iriſh* Priſoners out of the Goal and liſted them by Force; after they march'd, the Militia of the Town did Duty over us. About the 14th of *June* they fitted out three ſtout Ships from St. *Maloes*, the *French* Officers came to the Priſon of *Dinain*, and enter'd moſt Part of the *Dutch*, *Spaniards*, and other Foreigners taken in the *Engliſh* Service to go on board them.

No ſooner were the Brigades gone than our Uſage became more intollerable than before. The Governor being a Man much addicted to Drinking, would come two or three times a week in his Cups and beat us about for his Diverſion, calling us *Engliſh* Bougres, and other bad Names, if

if we made the leaſt Reply we were ſure to be put into the *Cuſhoe*.

THE poor Objects who lay dying in Hoſpitals, four or five in a Bed, were continually peſter'd with Prieſts, who made Uſe of every Argument to induce them to embrace the *Roman Catholick* Faith: One of our Crew was perpetually harraſſed by an *Iriſh* Friar; who, one Day came and aſſured him, that he would undoubtedly be damn'd, if he died a Heretick, but, the poor Fellow, bluntly told him, *That he ſhou'd be very glad, if he wou'd give him a good* Proteſtant *Prayer, but he'd be damn'd, and double damn'd, before he'd turn* Papiſt! Were it not for the Grace of God, the poor Fellow might be in Hell, (ſooner, perhaps, than was agreeable to him,) for he was not much given to Devotion; nay, I doubt, whether he could ſay the *Lord's-Prayer*; but he kept to his Integrity, for he was determined to be damn'd on his own Way, rather than turn. He dy'd that Night, and kept his Senſes to the laſt, ſeeming to be griev'd more at the

Thoughts

Thoughts of parting with his Companions, than from any other Conſideration. What is more extraordinary the Friar was found dead in his Bed the next Morning: Whether they had any Converſation together afterwards, on the ſame Subject, is uncertain.

But at length the happy Day of our Deliverance arriv'd, for on the 7th of *Auguſt* we embark'd on board the *Barrington* Tender, a Cartel-ſhip, being about Forty-five in Number, including the brave Mr. *Catling* the Firſt Lieutenant of the *Terrible*, Mr. *Withy* the Third Lieutenant, Mr. *Pouge*, Mate, Mr. *Harman*, Gunner, *John Bell*, Boatſwain's Mate, Mr. *Rogers*, Midſhipman, *John Brannon*, Gunner's Mate, and *Samuel Berry*, Captain's Cockſon.

There was above 256 *Engliſh* Priſoners on board the *Barrington* Tender, many of whom belong'd to *Shirley*'s and *Pepperel*'s Regiments taken at *Oſwego*, and ſome of the Crew of the *Hawke* Privateer of *Exeter*. We of the *Terrible*, who had ſuffer'd ſuch great Hardſhips, fearing that we ſhould be

preſs'd

preſs'd before we had had the Pleaſure of ſeeing our Wives and Families once more, agreed, with a Number of other Sufferers, who were bound to *Plymouth*, to land ourſelves at *Salcombe*.

F I N I S.

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